

CAUSE OF FALL OF NAPOLEON-.

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boldened by success, increases in a still more marked progression. Insurrection was now regarded by the Spaniards as a holy and sacred duty, to which the recent meetings of the Cortes in the Isle of Leon had given, as it were, a legitimate character, since Spain found again, in the remembrance of her ancient privileges, at least the shadow of a Government—a centre around which the defenders of the soil of the Peninsula could rally.¹

The Continental system was the cause, if not of the eventual fall, at least of the rapid fall of Napoleon. This cannot be doubted if we consider for a moment the brilliant situation of the Empire in 1811, and the effect simultaneously produced throughout Europe by that system, which undermined the most powerful throne which ever existed. It was the Continental system that Napoleon upheld in Spain, for he had persuaded himself that this system, rigorously enforced, would strike a death-blow to the commerce of England; and Duroc besides informed me of a circumstance which is of great weight in this question. Napoleon one day said to him, "I am no longer anxious that Joseph should be King of Spain; and he himself is indifferent about it. I would give the crown to the first comer who would shut his ports against the English."

Murat had come to Paris on the occasion of the Empress's accouchement, and I saw him several times during his stay, for we had always been on the best terms; and 'I must do him the justice to say that he never assumed the King but

¹ Lord Wellington gave Massena a beating at Fuentes d'Onore on the 5th of May 1811. It was soon after this battle that Napoleon sent Marmont to succeed Massena. Advancing on the southern frontier of Portugal, the skilful Soult contrived to take Badajoz from a wavering Spanish garrison. About this time however, General Graham, with his British corps, sailed out of Cadiz, and beat the French on the heights of Barrosa, which lie in front of Cadiz, which city the French were then besieging. Encouraged by the successes of our regular armies the Spanish Guerillas became more and more numerous and daring. By the end of 1811 Joseph Bonaparte found so many thorns in his usurped crown that he implored his brother to put it on some other head. Napoleon would not then listen to his prayer. In the course of 1811 a plan was laid for liberating Ferdinand from his prison in France and placing him at the head of affairs in Spain, but was detected by the emissaries of Bonaparte's police. Ferdinand's sister, the ex-Queen of Etruria, had also planned an escape to England. Her agents were betrayed, tried by a military commission, and shot—the Princess herself was condemned to close confinement in a Roman convent. — Editor of 1831 edition.